

## ATTACHMENT B

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**YOLO COUNTY  
SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLAN  
(SIP)**

**California Child and Family Services Review  
(C-CFSR)**

**I. SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLAN NARRATIVE**

**1. Local Planning Bodies (Present and Future)**

In summer of 2003, Yolo County Child Welfare began discussing the multitude of pending changes that would be occurring in the delivery of public child welfare services with other county and private agencies (community- based organizations, the education community, law enforcement agencies, courts, attorneys, foster parents, faith community, community members, and the County Board of Supervisors). Dissemination of information related to California's CWS Redesign, the Federal Review of California's child welfare program, California's response to the Federal Review, and the California Outcomes and Accountability Act of 2001 (AB 636) occurred through community forums.

The community forums were favorably received and considerable interest was expressed in participating in subsequent reviews and discussions. In general, there was an underlying theme of interest and acknowledgement of the importance for all entities to work together as a community for the betterment of Yolo County's children and families. Participants included representatives of the County Children's Alliance, law enforcement, education, mental health services, legal system, child care programs, domestic violence programs, family and foster youth advocates, health, faith, youth residential programs, family resource centers, in-patient and out-patient substance abuse service providers, providers of homeless and transitional living programs and other community based organizations.

Although there are service gaps within the continuum of services, Yolo County has a rich mixture of public and private agencies dedicated to working together to foster inter-agency communication and collaboration to design and/or implement timely services in order to better serve families.

Local planning bodies that had input into the County Self-Assessment process and System Improvement Plan (SIP) as well as those who will have a role in fulfilling the SIP are listed below.

- **Yolo County Child Welfare Services:** The county public agency responsible for child protective services and ongoing child welfare services to abused and neglected children and families within Yolo County. Responsibilities include all Juvenile Court matters related to children/families in the juvenile dependency system pursuant to WIC 300. Is also the lead agency responsible for completing the County Self-Assessment and County System Improvement Plan. Participants included: Diana Williams, Kimberly Byrd, Judy Gilchrist, Martha Lehman, Debbie Powell, Laverna Gordon, Kathleen Sutton, Esther Almas, Robyn Brown (CWS management, analyst, supervisory and line staff).
- **Yolo County Probation Department:** The county agency responsible for handling all juvenile and adult criminal cases. Scope of responsibility includes juvenile detention, juvenile intake, court investigations, community supervision and supervision of foster care placements ordered by the juvenile court pursuant to WIC 602. Partner agency in the County Self-Assessment and County System Improvement Plan (SIP). Participant: Rob Gonzales, Assistant Chief Probation Officer.
- **Yolo County Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services:** The county agency responsible for providing mental health, alcohol and other substance abuse services to children and adults. Participants included: Children's System of Care staff: Theresa Smith, Patricia Osuna.
- **Yolo County Health Department:** The county agency responsibilities include but is not limited to Public Health Field Nursing, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Children's Health and Disabilities Program (CHDP), California Children's Services (CCS), and Foster Care Nursing. Participant: Myrna Epstein, Epidemiologist.
- **Yolo County Public Defender:** County agency providing legal counsel for low-income/indigent adults and juveniles in the criminal justice system and legal counsel for parents in the CWS/Juvenile Court dependency system. Participant: Brian Dahlstedt, Attorney. (Note: Mr. Dahlstedt also served as liaison with other attorneys in the juvenile dependency system).
- **California Department of Social Services, Adoptions District Office:** The state agency that provides adoptions services via a Memorandum of Understanding between the State of California and the County of Yolo to children under the jurisdiction of Yolo County Juvenile Court and Yolo County Child Welfare Services. Participants: Patricia Grafton, District Office Manager and Patience Taba, Adoption Specialist.

- Yolo County Foster Parent Association: Local incorporated organization comprised of county licensed foster parents. Participant: Rena DeLacy, President Association President and Child Advocate.
- Faith Based Community: Karen Fitzgerald
- Community Member: Kathy Dreyer

### **Future Involvement of Other Local Planning Bodies**

The planning bodies referenced above will continue to have a role in fulfilling the System Improvement Plan. Other planning bodies that will have a role in ongoing SIP efforts to further prevention and intervention strategies include:

- Yolo County Children's Alliance
- Yolo County Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Council
- Yolo County Children and Families Commission
- Alta Regional Center
- CALWORKS (a Division within Department of Employment and Social Services)
- Communi-Care Health Centers
- Community College Foster and Kinship Care Education Program
- Consumers of Child Welfare Services
- Education Community
- Family Resource Centers
- Hands Together
- Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Center
- Yolo Crisis Nursery
- Yolo Wayfarer Center
- Yolo County Board of Supervisors
- YMART

## **2. Qualitative Change**

Yolo County primarily used two methods to collect data for the Self-assessment: (1) customer satisfaction surveys; and (2) Self-Assessment team meetings. Customer satisfaction surveys were sent to adults who were receiving services through the Emergency Response, Family Maintenance, Family Reunification, and Permanency Planning components of CWS. Other populations surveyed included: (1) relative caregivers; (2) county licensed foster parents; and (3) youth ages fifteen and one-half years and older who were receiving or were eligible to receive Independent Living Skills (ILP) services.

Two of the questions on the Relative and Foster Parent surveys were: (1) In what areas does Yolo County Child Welfare Services do a good job?; and (2) In what areas would you like to see improvement?

In response to the question “In what areas does Yolo County do a good job?” some foster parents stated:

- All areas; better than adequate
- Sending Court reports and keeping in touch; letting me know about court dates and what is going to happen
- Overall, they have done a good job
- Protecting child’s welfare and having a case plan
- They have a genuine regard for the kids and are encouraging emotionally.

In response to “In what areas would you like to see improvement?” foster parent responses included:

- Telephone response time
- Communication and respect
- Help with transportation
- Lower caseloads so they have time to communicate
- More openness about cases
- More communication with co-worker

Although foster parent and relative comments were generally positive, their common concern was lack of access to the child’s social worker and the communication gaps that they feel occur when cases transfer between social workers and Units. A second frequent comment from both groups of respondents was the length of time it took for their social worker to return phone calls.

In that this was the agency’s first attempt to use survey tools in CWS, there is room for improvement in using this method. For example, a smaller percentage of foster parents than expected returned the survey, indicating more work needs to be done in soliciting responses; some foster parents found it difficult to respond to some questions because of different levels of satisfaction with different social worker, indicating a need for the survey to be more specific as to a time period or specific social worker when answering the questions. Future survey design will take into consideration lessons learned from this initial survey process. Some foster parents have expressed an interest in working with the Department in future survey design efforts. The Department views this offer as an opportunity to address in more depth the foster parent issues, for the foster parents to feel as though they have had an opportunity for honest input, and that foster parents can feel safe in openly expressing their views through this process. One step in our SIP is to conduct additional surveys so that we have current information regarding our performance and areas of strengths and challenges.

Yolo's second method for collecting and analyzing data was to create a Self-Assessment team, the composition of which is identified above. The Team met regularly to review and analyze the county data as provided by the State and UC Berkeley.

Concerns identified by the Self-Assessment Team included:

- Some foster parents reporting that their requests for services or assistance go unheeded for prolonged periods of time;
- A perceived hesitancy by some caregivers to participate in Foster and Kinship Education classes;
- Foster parent recruitment and retention are issues which impact placement resources
- Delays in Court proceedings impact permanency planning for children
- Varying degrees of knowledge and experience among social workers regarding available services for parents, potentially impacts Family Reunification efforts;
- Referrals which do not meet the threshold for continuing CWS services are screened out resulting in no follow-up with family to ensure they connected with other services; this sometimes results in re-referrals to CWS when the situation continues to deteriorate.

The above areas of concern have been incorporated into the Department's SIP which focuses on the following four (4) Outcome Measures:

- Recurrence of Maltreatment
- Recurrence of Abuse and/or Neglect in Homes Where Children Were Not Removed
- Length of Time to Exit Foster Care to Adoption
- Foster Care Placement in Least Restrictive Settings

### 3. Summary Assessment (Section V) of the Self-Assessment

## **The following is an excerpt from the Yolo County Self-Assessment:**

### **V. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT**

Throughout the self-assessment process, Yolo County has relied on a traditional greeting among the Masai tribe of Africa—"Kasserian Ingera"—which means "How are the children?" as our guiding principals. Over time, we hope to be able to respond with "Sapati Ingera"—The "Children Are Well." (Refer to Attachment E for more information.)

#### **C-CFSR OUTCOMES**

- 1. Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.**
- 2. Children are maintained safely in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.**
- 3. Children have permanency and stability in their living situations without increasing reentry to foster care.**
- 4. The family relationships and connections of the children served by the CWS will be preserved as appropriate.**
- 5. Children receive services appropriate to their educational needs.**
- 6. Children receive services adequate to their physical, emotional and mental health needs.**
- 7. Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.**
- 8. Youth emancipating from foster care are prepared to transition to adulthood.**

### **A. Discussion of System Strengths and Areas Needing Improvements**

The Yolo County Department of Employment and Social Services Child Welfare Self-Assessment was an informative process. Using the "first edition" of the Outcome and Accountability County Data Report was enlightening and helped focus our attention on performance in the context of what our official data indicates versus how we think we perform in certain areas. In some instances, we agreed that the outcomes as presented were valid; in other instances, we were surprised at our

performance and thought that our performance was higher than that reported. Regardless, there was unwavering interest in the process by all parties and recognition of the importance of accurate and timely data entry in order to increase data reliability.

Overall, we believe that the Yolo County Child Welfare Services program has many strengths and staff deliver child welfare services in a manner that addresses child safety, permanency, and child/family well being. Further, we believe that a combination of system and performance issues impact our outcomes. These need to be addressed in order for us to improve our overall performance. We believe that systems issues need to be addressed expeditiously in order for us to have a clearer picture of our performance. In turn, this will help guide us in determining where we need to further concentrate our efforts. We expect this to be an on going process and done in conjunction with rethinking and modifying our delivery of services. In some instances, this may include a restructuring of existing internal resources. In other instances, it will include expansion of services, adoption of a more inclusionary process of families and community.

At the conclusion of the self-assessment process, team members had a much greater understanding of the CWS system as well as increased insight into the breadth and complexity of the system. There was also acknowledgement that CWS cannot be effective in fulfilling our goals in isolation of community services and that clear and frequent communication between partners is critical to building strong partnerships, be they intra-agency communication, working with other agency staff, with individual family members or caregivers, or the courts.

Yolo County is fully committed to providing services to children and families in the most effective as well as efficient manner possible consistent with outcomes defined as stated above. . We are very aware of the magnitude of challenges we will confront over the course of the next three years as we redefine our business practices and service delivery. And, while we undoubtedly will struggle in this process, we expect to emerge with a more focused and effective system. In short, we believe these investments in fundamental changes will produce multiple returns for children/youth, families, caregivers, and staff. Based on the self-assessment process, areas we believe need to be addressed in order to achieve a more accurate profile and/or to improve our performance as reflected in the quarterly Outcome & Accountability County Data Report areas are identified below

The integrity of our CWS/CMS data is a critical area. Attention to existing data contained in CWS/CMS is needed in order to determine our present level of accuracy and completeness, whether there is duplication of information, omission of critical information, and/or whether information has been properly recorded in the appropriate fields and notebooks within the system in order for it to be statistically available and accurate. Clean up of current data as well as timely entry of data, i.e. documentation of timely social worker visits, is critical. For example, we believe that our face-to-face contacts with our children are greater than indicated in the



initial report. We were also concerned with the length of time it takes to achieve permanency, i.e. adoption.

Establishing clearer and more comprehensive policies and procedures for what, where, when, and how information is documented in CWS/CMS by staff and standardizing these processes for staff will enable us to better review and evaluate our data as well as identify our continuing gaps in performance. Further, it will assist us in better understanding additional training needs of staff and develop training plans accordingly.

Similarly, standardizing data entry requirements in all future cases should ensure worker consistency in using the system and increased social worker competency and proficiency in using CWS/CMS. Steps have been initiated to address data “clean up”... Weekly monitoring of caseloads by child welfare management and supervisors using the tools available within CWS/CMS as well as CAD IQ has been implemented and will continue.

Throughout the self-assessment, several themes emerged regardless of which Outcome was discussed. Inconsistent interpretation of laws, regulations, policy, and dissemination of information by agency staff was noted. This applied to communication with parents, caregivers, other agencies, and the Courts. Another theme pertained to safety and risk assessment in determining child protection, child maltreatment, level of intervention, and permanency. Whereas the present model (Fresno) used by Yolo County allows for variables and subjectivity, the use of a standardized tool to assess risk factors across the life of the case would further efforts to minimize bias and move us towards a more uniform and objective-based model. One such model being piloted in many counties is the evidence based model Structured Decision Making (SDM). We propose to explore in more detail the feasibility of using this model in Yolo County.

Yolo County recognizes the importance of family relationships and will continue to give priority consideration to placement with relatives when appropriate and in the best interests of the child. We believe that we can expand our current practice of assessing possible placement with interested and appropriate relatives. Despite this goal as a first priority for consideration, there is still a need for non-relative caregivers. Available out of home placement resources within Yolo County is a serious problem. The number of county licensed foster homes has decreased drastically which seriously impacts our ability to maintain children in their communities and school, and to make the most appropriate placement selection consistent with the child’s needs and cultural ties. Lack of local resources also impact on-going family relationships and impede reunification efforts. We are fortunate to have a very strong foster and kinship care education program through our partnership with Woodland Community College. The knowledge, skill, and other information about child development, behaviors, separation and loss relative and non-relative caregivers acquire through these trainings are invaluable.

It is essential that we increase our recruitment and retention of caregivers and that they be provided with on-going support, information, and resources in order to ensure that children's physical, emotional and mental health needs are addressed timely and effectively. We propose to address this in our Self Improvement Plan (SIP).

Yolo County's Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) data is incomplete and merits attention. We recognize the importance of the Act and have improved our practice of inquiring of possible American Indian heritage earlier in a case. However, we believe there are instances where such information has been acquired very late in a case and, therefore, has delayed permanency decisions on the child's behalf. We propose to address this in our SIP.

Statewide, past and present youth in the foster care system have voiced concern with their lack of preparedness for transitioning from foster care to young adulthood. We believe that our current services meet minimum standards but can be improved upon through increased community and intra-agency services. We propose to increase services to this population and to address specific areas in our SIP.

## **B. AREAS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION THROUGH THE PEER QUALITY CASE REVIEW**

Yolo County has not participated in a Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) to date. We believe this process could help us evaluate and improve the quality of services to children and youth in Yolo County Child Welfare and Probation systems. While a comprehensive, in-depth review of all aspects of a CWS case would be useful information, it is probably unrealistic considering the demand of resources the PQCR process requires of all participating parties. Based on our performance as reported in the January 2004 report, we believe an intensive review of our performance in SAFETY OUTCOMES would be helpful. Specifically, review of Recurrence of Maltreatment and Rate of Recurrence of Abuse and/or Neglect in Homes Where Children Were Not Removed would assist the County in evaluating whether the quality of existing assessments, and/or services are sufficient, whether there are alternative services and other considerations that the County could utilize and how we might restructure and develop increased capacity in better meeting the needs of these referrals and/or cases. Feedback in both Emergency Response and Family Maintenance components would be useful.

## **II. SIP PLAN COMPONENTS**

The four (4) Outcomes that Yolo County will be addressing are listed above. Please refer to the following pages for details of each Outcome.

<b>Outcome/Systemic Factor:</b>						
<b>1B (State) Recurrence of Maltreatment:</b> Children who had a substantiated referral during the 12 month review period followed by a subsequent substantiated referral within 12 months.						
<b>County’s Current Performance:</b>						
<b>Yolo County’s Current Performance: STATE:</b> Yolo County’s current performance is: <b>17.0 percent</b>						
<b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b>						
All social workers will be familiar with risk and safety assessment criteria for children and families and will apply this criteria throughout the life of an open CWS case.						
<b>Strategy 1. 1</b> Building on Core Curriculum training provided through the Regional Training Academy (RTA), design and distribute to staff written guidelines to use in assessing safety elements and needs in a case.				<b>Strategy Rationale<sup>1</sup></b> Social workers and community partners sometimes differ in their assessment of level of risk to children as well as level of intervention necessary to ameliorate a situation.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.1.1</b> Develop written reference information to be used by all staff outlining the criteria to be used in conducting safety and risk assessments throughout all case junctures.	<b>Timeframe</b>	By May, 2005		<b>Assigned to</b>	CWS Unit Supervisors, Division Manager and Analyst
	<b>1.1.2</b> Distribute written information developed in 1.1.1 to all CWS social workers and review with staff in Division meetings.		By June, 2005			CWS Unit Supervisors and Division Manager

<sup>1</sup> Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor

	<b>1.1.3</b> Review with community partner agencies Yolo County CWS's screening criteria and process for assessing safety and on-going needs assessment.		By August, 2005		Assistant Director and Division Manager
<b>Strategy 1. 2</b> Explore the feasibility of incorporating a formal standardized research- based risk assessment tool process into Yolo CWS program practice.			<b>Strategy Rationale <sup>1</sup></b> To ensure that all issues of safety, abuse and neglect are assessed in a consistent and fair manner and are applied across all CWS service components in a fair and equitable manner.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.2.1.</b> Contact the Regional Training Academy (RTA) to arrange for standardized Safety and Risk Assessment training for CWS staff, other intra-agency partners (CalWorks and CalLearn) as well as other community partners	<b>Timeframe</b>	By February, 2005	<b>Assigned to</b>	CWS Division Manager and Staff Development Coordinator
	<b>1.2.2</b> Provide training to staff/partners referenced in 1.2.1 above.		By August, 2005		CWS Division Manager, Staff Development Coordinator, and RTA
	<b>1.2.3</b> Test use of standardized tool in ER telephone screening, analyze and expand to other components incrementally.		By September, 2005		CWS Division Manager, ER Supervisor, Analyst
	<b>1.2.4</b> Develop formal ER telephone differential response system.		By September, 2005		See above
	<b>1.2.5</b> Consider implementation of standardized tool.		By September, 2005		Director, CWS Assistant Director, Division Manager, and CWS Supervisors

<b>Improvement Goal 2.0</b> Expand the services “safety net” for families who are experiencing abuse/neglect risk issues within the family which, if unchecked, could ultimately escalate to a level requiring CWS intervention for protection and safety reasons; but at the point of referral or initial investigation do not meet the threshold for on-going CWS intervention.					
<b>Strategy 2.1</b> Analyze all incoming referrals using Business Objects in effort to identify contributing factors to our performance i.e., whether patterns emerge regarding type of allegation, duplication of allegation, or new allegations are being reported, whether there is prevalence of reporting within specific geographic areas of the county or particular type of reporters, or whether we have CWS/CMS coding issues.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> In order to ensure that we are thoroughly addressing referrals and not compromising child safety, it is important to evaluate possible contributing factors influencing our performance in this Outcome.		
Milestone	<b>2.1.1</b> Run Business Objects report in order to evaluate the types and sources of substantiated referrals	Timeframe	By November 19, 2004	Assigned to	CWS Management, Supervisors, and Analysts
	<b>2.1.2</b> Based on data in 2.1.1,modify current CWS/CMS data entry practices and/or clarify with staff coding issues		By December 15, 2004		CWS Management, Supervisors, and Analysts
	<b>2.1.3</b> Monitor all referrals, using Business Objects and County Quarterly Data Reports, to determine if Recurrence incidence decreases		By February 1, 2005		CWS Management, Supervisors, and Analysts
<b>Strategy 2. 2</b> Work with Yolo County Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Council (CAPCC) to develop new community approaches to reduce repeated occurrence of maltreatment and to increase services to Yolo County families that do not rise to the level of risk requiring CPS intervention.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Services are often needed by families to solve problems which do not require more intrusive CWS types of interventions. 1		

Milestone	2.2.1 Meet with Yolo County CAPCC to discuss the types of referrals reported to CPS, the disposition, and strategize use of other community agencies	Timeframe	By May, 2005	Assigned to	Director and CWS Assistant Director
Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal. NONE					
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Possible financial support to purchase training for CWS and Community Agencies and other local partners through the Regional Training Academy					
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.					
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. None					

<sup>1</sup> Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor

<b>Outcome/Systemic Factor:</b> <b>2A:</b> Recurrence of Abuse and/or Neglect Where Children who remained in their own homes had an allegation ( <b>inconclusive or substantiated</b> ) within the 12- month review period and had a subsequent substantiated allegation within 12 months.					
<b>County's Current Performance:</b>  Yolo County's Current Performance is: <b>11.3 percent</b>					
<b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b> Reduce recurrence of abuse and/or neglect through increased communication with other stakeholders and referral to and coordination of prevention and early intervention services available within other Divisions within Department of Employment and Social Services (DESS) as well as other county agencies and private providers within the county.					
<b>Strategy 1. 1</b> Review all referrals received by CWS hotline for possible referral to and follow up services, including expanded services, by other existing programs within DESS.			<b>Strategy Rationale<sup>2</sup></b> Families may be more receptive to early intervention and/or prevention services from non-CWS providers whom they perceive as more supportive to preserving the family unit or which whom they have an established working relationship. Referral information received by CWS and forwarded within appropriate confidentiality guidelines to CalWORKS or Cal Learn for on-going services in open cases can reduce the need for CWS intervention as well as increase family's functioning in self-sufficiency, thus forestalling or eliminating the need for a more intrusive level of intervention.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.1.1</b> Hold exploratory discussions between CWS and CalWORKS Divisions regarding feasibility of developing a formalized referral process for CWS ER hotline referrals.	<b>Timeframe</b>	By October 30, 2004	<b>Assigned to</b>	CWS and ETS Division Managers, ER Supervisor and ETS Supervisor

<sup>2</sup> Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor

	<b>1.1.2</b> Develop criteria and written policy for referral process between CWS and CalWORKS.		By December 30, 2004		CWS Supervisors, ETS Supervisors, Division Managers, Analysts.
	<b>1.1.3</b> Train staff in CWS and ETS Divisions regarding policy and procedures		By February, 2005		Staff Development Coordinator, CWS Supervisors, and Division Managers
	<b>1.1.4</b> Implement Differential Response of ER hotline referrals to CalWORKS based upon previously agreed criteria		By early March, 2005		CWS and ETS Division Managers and ER and ETS Supervisors



<b>Improvement Goal 2.0</b> Expand coordinated services with other county agencies and community based organizations in order to more effectively address prevention and early intervention services for children and families who CWS determines: (1) do not meet the threshold of risk for CWS intervention services; and (2) children and families for whom CWS opens a services case.						
<b>Strategy 2.1</b> Use PSSF funds on Family Maintenance services			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Allocating PSSF monies to help preserve and restore family functioning will help to preserve intact families and build healthy family systems. <sup>1</sup>			
Milestone	<b>2.1.1</b> Review existing Best Practices models that are operational in other counties	Timeframe	By February, 2005		Assigned to	CWS Analyst
	<b>2.1.2</b> Identify Best Practice models that would be appropriate to implement locally.		By February, 15, 2005			See above
	<b>2.1.3</b> Develop PSSF RFP proposal, send to County Counsel for review, Board of Supervisors approval and issue proposal		By March, 2005			CWS Division Manager and Analyst
<b>Strategy 2. 2</b> Collaborate with Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Council to target at risk families			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> To establish a broad based community-wide effort to engage the various service organizations providing services to Yolo County children and families and reduce duplication of services. <sup>1</sup>			

Milestone	2.2.1 Research best practices in child abuse prevention efforts	Timeframe	By January, 2005	Assigned to	Analyst
	2.2.2 Meet with CAPCC Executive Director to develop strategies and budget.		By February, 2005		Assistant Director, Division Manager
Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal. None					
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Cross training between ER hotline staff , after-hours staff and CalWORKS staff will be needed in order for all to be fully informed of the criteria for referrals as well as a review of Mandated Reporter training.					
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. CalWorks and CWS play a joint role in ensuring that clear communication is exchanged and that the goal of each entity is to further the strengthening and preserving of the family.					
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. None					

<sup>1</sup> Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor

<b>Outcome/Systemic Factor:</b> <b>3A: Length of Time to Exit Foster Care to Adoption</b>				
<b>3A (State):</b> Percent of children who entered child welfare supervised foster care for the first time (and stayed at least five days) during the 12 month study period who were adopted within 24 months				
<b>County's Current Performance:</b> Yolo County's current performance is: <b>2.5 percent</b>				
<b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b> Significantly decrease the length of time it takes to achieve legal permanency for Yolo County children.				
<b>Strategy 1. 1</b> Conduct review of all juvenile court cases opened within the past six (6) months as of 10/01/04 to determine if case has a Juvenile Court disposition order, contains documented information related to Concurrent Planning. Services Plan.			<b>Strategy Rationale<sup>3</sup></b> A review of cases will aid CWS in clarifying and remediating issues internal to our system as well as identifying external issues that presently impede permanency.	
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.1.1</b> <b>Develop</b> review check list for information listed above, <b>conduct</b> case reviews, and <b>analyze</b> results.	<b>Timeframe</b>	By April, 2005	<b>Assigned to</b> CWS Supervisor and Analyst

<sup>3</sup> Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor

	<b>1.1.2</b> Arrange for and provide Concurrent Services Planning training for all Child Welfare social workers through Regional Training Academy resources or State Adoption staff. Regarding State processes, WIC 366.26 referral timeframe requirements, notice of hearing requirements, need for timely receipt of WIC 366.26 Court orders		By April, 2005		CWS Management and Staff Development Coordinator
	<b>1.1.3</b> Develop written Concurrent Planning Policy and Procedures deskguide that includes roles, responsibilities and other related processes necessary to effect timely and regular communication between county staff and State Adoption staff		By April, 2005		Analysts, CWS Supervisors and Manager
	<b>1.1.4</b> Expand existing county/state staff case review to include review of ER and FR cases to identify appropriate concurrent referrals early and include Unit supervisor(s) in process.		By January, 2005		CWS Manager, CWS Supervisors, and State Adoption Staff.
<b>Strategy 1. 2</b> Identify and review all existing Family Reunification cases which have been in the foster care system between six and 10 months to ensure that all factors listed in Strategy 1.1 above have been addressed and documented as well as a formal written referral to State Adoptions for assessment is on file, along with all vital statistical forms necessary to the case.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Periodic and timely case reviews internally and with State Adoptions staff will reduce delays per Strategy Rationale 1.1 above and facilitate earlier permanency for children. <sup>1</sup>		

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.2.1.</b> Establish meetings of county/state staff on quarterly basis to review progress of cases, case issues related to post-termination of FR services and other issues related to ICWA, court orders, noticing, etc. and problem-solve barriers.	<b>Timeframe</b>	By November 12, 2004	<b>Assigned to</b>	CWS and State Adoptions Managers and Supervisors
	<b>1.2.2</b> Create written tool for tracking case movement post-termination of FR services and implement tool		By February, 2005		CWS and State Adoptions Supervisors
	<b>1.2.3</b> Evaluate CWS/CMS use issues by both county and State Adoptions to ensure cases are entered timely and accurately, and do clean-up as necessary. .		By March, 2005		CWS and State Adoptions Managers, Supervisors, line staff, and CWS/CMS Analyst

<b>Improvement Goal 2.0</b> Expand and improve communications between CWS program staff, State Adoptions Staff, Relative and Non-Relative Caregivers, and Juvenile Court personnel					
<b>Strategy 2.1</b> Hold regular periodic meetings between CWS, State Adoptions, and Juvenile Court to review statutes, issues, and other requirements effecting timely permanency for children.			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> In order for children to have permanency and stability at the earliest possible point, it is essential that all professional disciplines with responsibility for ensuring child safety and permanency have a thorough understanding of their own and one another's role in achieving permanency and to create a Court system that is responsive to the child's needs.		
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>2.1.1</b> Discuss with Court the feasibility of designating quarterly meetings specific to Adoption issues and include State Adoption staff, CWS and attorneys	<b>Timeframe</b>	By November 1, 2004 and on-going	<b>Assigned to</b>	CWS Assistant Director
	<b>2.1.2</b> Include Court and attorneys in Concurrent Planning training, along with CWS and Adoptions staff.		By April, 2005		CWS Assistant Director, Division Manager
	<b>2.1.3</b> Discuss with the Juvenile Court the interest in re-instating periodic "in-service" trainings for all professional participants in Juvenile Court proceedings as well as community providers.		By June 30, 2005		CWS Assistant Director, Division Manager

<b>2.1.4</b> Discuss with Court ways to ensure that relatives, foster parents, and pending adoptive parents feel they are an important part of the court processes		By June 30, 2005		CWS Assistant Director, Division Manager, Supervisors, State Adoptions, and Yolo County Foster Parent Association.
<b>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal</b> There needs to be more emphasis placed by CDSS and Judicial Council on building agency/court working relationships with built in monitoring and accountability.				
<b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b> Concurrent Planning training curriculum is needed which is comprehensive enough to address CWS issues and Juvenile Court involvement. Joint trainings for social worker and juvenile court judges and attorneys should be required in order to increase understanding of federal and state laws (and timeframes) governing child welfare and juvenile court proceedings				
<b>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</b> State Adoptions and the Courts play a critical role in success of this outcome through their cooperation and willingness to participate.				
<b>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</b> None				

how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor

<b>Outcome/Systemic Factor:</b> <b>4B: FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT IN LEAST RESTRICTIVE SETTING:</b> The percent of children in child welfare supervised foster care who were in kin, foster, foster family agency (FFA), group home, and other placements.											
<b>County's Current Performance:</b> Yolo County's current performance for the review period 01/01/03-12/32/03" <b>Primary Placement:</b> <table> <tr> <td>4B Relative</td><td><b>28.6 percent</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>4B Foster Home</td><td><b>10.6 percent</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>4B FFA</td><td><b>56.1 percent</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>4B Group/Shelter</td><td><b>4.8 percent</b></td></tr> <tr> <td>4B Other</td><td><b>0.0 percent</b></td></tr> </table>		4B Relative	<b>28.6 percent</b>	4B Foster Home	<b>10.6 percent</b>	4B FFA	<b>56.1 percent</b>	4B Group/Shelter	<b>4.8 percent</b>	4B Other	<b>0.0 percent</b>
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<b>Improvement Goal 1.0</b> <b>Increase the utilization of relatives as suitable placement resources for children needing out of home care.</b>											
<b>Strategy 1. 1</b> Establish written guidelines for social workers to use in selecting least restrictive placement for child, emphasizing the value of kinship care	<b>Strategy Rationale<sup>4</sup></b> Use of written guide establishes the Agency's expectations and uniformly clarifies for all social workers the priorities to be considered when selecting placements. Guidelines will serve to reinforce for all staff the statutory requirements, establish the importance of relatives in providing children with a sense of belonging, and address concurrent planning issues										

<sup>4</sup> Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor



Milestone	1.1.1 Provide refresher training for staff focusing on importance of kincare in the context of concurrent planning. Address philosophical concerns that may be creating barriers to utilization of relatives as suitable caregivers through ongoing training and workshops.	Timeframe	By May, 2005 and ongoing	Assigned to	Assistant Director, Division Manager and Supervisors
	1.1.2 Develop and issue written Agency guidelines regarding relative assessments and emergency placement with relatives		By March 1, 2005		CWS Supervisors, Analysts, Assistant Director and Division Manager
	1.1.3 Utilize components of Family Group Conferencing, when possible, to develop the best placement plan consistent with the minor's needs		By April 4, 2005		Trained line staff
Strategy 1. 2 Ensure that inquiry of all possible available relatives occurs at the beginning of a case and occurs at all subsequent points throughout the life of the case and that the case record documents the complete spectrum of relatives considered for placement and the disposition of each relative			Strategy Rationale <sup>1</sup> Early and on-going inquiry of all available relative information will expand use of relatives as resources for the child and avoid new information surfacing late in the case that might contribute to permanency delays for the child.		
	1.2.1 Establish process for immediate clearance of relatives for initial placement		By December 10, 2004		Assistant Director, Division Manager, CWS Supervisors and Analyst

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.2.2.</b> Develop form for parents to complete identifying possible suitable relative caregivers and provide to assigned social worker for follow-up.	<b>Timeframe</b>	By December 10, 2004	<b>Assigned to</b>	CWS Supervisors, Analyst
	<b>1.2.3</b> Work with County Counsel and subsequently the Court, and attorney for parents regarding importance of obtaining extended family information at initial Court hearing which CWS could consider in developing subsequent placement plans on behalf of the minor.		By December 10, 2004		Assistant Director, Division Manager
	<b>1.2.4</b> Train social workers to inquire about available relatives prior to every court hearing		By December 10, 2004		Division Manager and CWS Supervisors
	<b>1.2.5</b> Establish routine staffing to reassess transitioning children in group homes to relative care		By December 10, 2004		Division Manager and CWS Supervisors
<b>Strategy 1. 3</b> Establish and maintain clear and effective working relationships with relative caregivers			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Clear and effective working relationships ensure that the substitute caregiver is aware of and willing to carry out their roles and responsibilities on behalf of the child and ensure that the child's needs can more readily be managed <sup>1</sup>		
	<b>1.3.1</b> Create informational pamphlet for relatives explaining Juvenile Court and CWS processes, expectations, and roles and responsibilities of agency, court, and caregiver		By February, 2005		Assistant Director, Division Manager, CWS Supervisors, and Analyst

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>1.3.2</b> At the time of the relative assessment and approval process, and subsequent to placement, the social worker will: provide a comprehensive overview of CWS and Court services; provide booklet on roles and responsibilities of agency, courts, and caregiver; and orally review with caregiver the above information.	<b>Timeframe</b>	By December 1, 2004 and on-going	<b>Assigned to</b>	Social Workers
	<b>1.3.3</b> Ensure that relative are informed of available resources, how to access resources and are provided with telephone numbers.		By December 1, 2004 and on-going		CWS Supervisors and Social Workers
	<b>1.3.4</b> In addition to items in <b>1.3.1</b> , Concurrent Planning will be discussed with the prospective relative caregiver and documented in the case file.		By December 1, 2004 and on-going		Social Workers
	<b>1.3.5</b> CWS agency staff will collaborate with the community college Foster and Kinship Care Education (FKCE) Program to further develop training and support resources for relative caregivers.		On-going		CWS Management and CWS Supervisors

<b>Improvement Goal 2.0</b> Increase the pool of available county licensed homes for children needing temporary out of home care.					
<b>Strategy 2.1</b> Develop and implement county licensed foster home recruitment business plan			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> <sup>1</sup> A comprehensive analysis and subsequent development and implementation of a business plan will enable us to improve our efforts to maintain Yolo County children in foster home family-like settings within their own community and reduce our need to use FFA higher level of care resources		
Milestone	2.1.1 Team with Child Abuse Prevention Council for community recruitment outreach	Timeframe	By October 2004	Assigned to	
	2.1.2 Focus recruitment based on geographic area of child’s community of origin <b>AND</b> bi-cultural considerations		November 2004 thru June 2005		See 2.1.1 above
	2.1.3 Consult with County Foster Parent Association and FKCE program regarding community outreach efforts		By November, 2004		See 2.1.1 above
	2.1.4 Increase the number of available foster homes by 100 percent		By June 2005		Foster Care Licensing Evaluator, Division Manager and Assistant Director
<b>Strategy 2. 2</b> Develop and implement county licensed foster home retention business plan			<b>Strategy Rationale</b> Recognition and support of the important role of county licensed foster homes within the child welfare service continuum is essential to fostering child safety, well-being, and permanency <sup>1</sup>		

Milestone		Timeframe		Assigned to	
	2.2.1 Team with Child Abuse Prevention Council and Foster Parent Association to implement retention outreach		By July 1, 2005		Assistant Director, Division Manager, and Analyst
	2.2.2 Develop respite care program and funding		By July 1, 2005		Assistant Director, Division Manager, and Analyst
	2.2.3 Develop and conduct survey of currently licensed homes to determine areas of greatest needs, strengths, weaknesses, gaps of current system		By August, 2005		CWS management, analyst, and Foster Parent Association representative
Milestone	2.3.1 Develop and distribute Fact Sheets regarding specialized recruitment needs	Timeframe	By July 1, 2005	Assigned to	Assistant Director, Division Manager, FKCE program, Child Abuse Prevention Council and other community provider(s)
<b>Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>When children are placed with relatives within the county, CWS is aware of local resources and the FKCE training available to relatives. When we place children with relatives in other counties we do not necessarily know what local FKCE resources are available to them or how to efficiently locate services on their behalf. A statewide website of county contacts for such program resources would be helpful.</li></ul>					
<b>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</b>					

Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor